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"And why wouldn't it be true?" says he. "Sure it's written by a very reverend, and do you think he'd put his name to it if it wasn't true?" "I don't know about that," says Jerry; "but I know this much, that I must have good proof before I believe that a bit of card covered with silk can work miracles." "See now," says Murty, "how well the book knew what the likes of you would say. It tells us that there are some 'delicate and squeamish' souls that hesitate to lend their assent to the relation of prodigies by such means as these," but that nevertheless they're all true." "I never knew before," says Jerry, "that I was any way delicate or squeamish; but, indeed, a man must have a very strong stomach to swallow all that's in that book." "Arra, don't bother yourself with the likes of him," says old Molly Crone. "In spite of all his talk 'twill be with him as it was with a better man in the old times."

'Saint Augustine, meeting Lot one day before he was converted, began to scold the scapular, and all that it asserted. But, says Lot, says he, 'it's plain that you're an anti-Trinitarian. But before you die 'twill come to pass that you'll die a scapularian.'"

"Why," says Jerry, "I'm not denying the virtue of the scapular at all, I'm only asking for some proof of it." "Cock you up with proof," says Murty. "Isn't a priest's word proof enough for you; and, besides," says he, "we don't say that the virtue lies in the bit of card or the bit of silk, but in the power of the blessed Virgin that accompanies it." "Let us hear about it, any how," says Jerry. "Well," says he, "the book tells us that the scapular was first given by the Virgin Mary to the glorious St. Simon Stock, and that he handed it down to us." "And who was St. Simon Stock himself?" says Jerry, "if I may be so bold as to ask." "He was a great saint entirely," says Murty. "And when did he live?" says Jerry. "The book don't tell that," says he. "Well, then," says Jerry, "where did he live?" "The book don't tell us that either," says he. "And what proof have we that the Virgin ever gave him a scapular at all?" says Jerry. "Arra, don't be riddling me with questions," says he, "but listen to what the book says—'The most distinguished personages have received it, the kings of France and Spain, and the emperors of Germany, and the most reverend Father Innocent, general of the seraphical order of the Capuchins, and innumerable dignitaries of the Church, have been aggregated to it,' and isn't that proof enough?" "No," says Jerry, "I must have some better proof before I believe that a bit of card covered with silk can work miracles. For instance," says he, "bring up your scapular to poor Bill Condon that's in fever, and if it cures him (as the book describes), then I'll believe in it." So with that old Molly flew at him, and says she, "You unbelieving reprobate, is that what you're at; you'd believe your poor sinful eyes, that the devil has put his mark upon, but you'd doubt the word of a blessed saint of a priest. Get out of the house," says she, "before the roof falls on us; for your heart is a dunghill, and suspicion is the cock that crows on it. But, Murty darling," says she, "don't let it go with the hard-hearted Turk in that way, but prove it for him out of the Bible, and then he'll have to give in." "So I will," says he, "but, Molly ashore, whereabouts will I find it." "You'll find it in the gospel of Saint Jonah," says she; "for don't you remember what the blessed verses say—

'When Jonah he sojourned in the belly of the whale It's he that had the scapular upon him, I'll be bail; Do you think that if he hadn't it the whale would be so slack, As that he'd be the customer to ever let him back? Then glory to the scapular, and may it never fail, And may every one that wears it be pious as the whale.'

"There's no such thing in the Bible at all," says Jerry; "and if you've no better proof than the words of an old ballad, you may as well give it up as a bad job. And, moreover," says he, "I'd like to know what right have you to come here and abuse a decent man in his own house. Who sent for you, at all, at all?" "May I never," says she, "but you beat the Danes in impudence. Who sent for me, is it? I sent for myself, and I came according to the message. Your house," says she, "you poor, pitiful negur. By this and by that, if I was your wife I'd soon let you see whose house it was." So when Jerry saw that he was getting the worst of it, he turned to Murty, and says he, "Tell us something about the rules of your society."

"Well," says he, "it's them's the rules would make good Christians of you all; for the book tells us that 'the postulant must be a person that is not addicted to cursing or swearing, or prone to drinking intoxicating liquors.'"

"Well," says Jerry, "that rule surprises me greatly." "What's surprising in it," says Murty, "except that it's surprisin' good." "I don't dispute that at all," says Jerry; "but, tell me, isn't Ned Collins a scapularian?" "He is," says he. "Well," says Jerry, "don't all the country know that there's not a greater blasphemer from the sea to the Shannon than the same man?" "There's no denying it," says Mick Desmond; "for he's a fellow that would swear a hole in an iron pot if the bottom wasn't very thick." "And then, again," says Jerry, "isn't Jack Molony a scapularian?" "He is," says Murty. "And isn't it well known," says Jerry, "that he never goes to bed sober, barring when he hasn't

the means of getting drunk. Sure, 'twas himself made the fool of Father John. The priest, like a decent man as he is, made him swear against taking a drop of anything inside the door of a public-house; but next Sunday he found my lad as drunk as a piper. But still he didn't break his vow; for he didn't drink inside the house, but outside it. So Father John thought to catch him completely by making him swear not to drink a drop either inside or outside a public-house. But the poor priest's heart was nearly broke when he found him next Sunday drinking as hard as ever in the door of a shebeen. 'Where's your word, you reprobate?' says he. 'Where's your promise, you undutiful heathen?' 'It's safe and sound, father, jewell,' says he; 'for don't you see that I've one leg inside the door and one leg outside, so I defy the old boy himself to say that Jack Molony has broke his vow. I'm neither inside the house nor outside it, but just betwixt and between.' And," says Jerry, "if there was any necessity I could give you fifty names of people that are scapularians; but, to judge by their conduct, it doesn't do them much good." "But, then," says Murty, "look at all the penances and mortifications they go through. Sure if they had a crust of sin on their souls an inch thick 'twould wipe it all away." "Them must be awful punishments, surely," says Jerry. "Tell us what they are." "Well," says he, "each brother and sister is bound to recite every day seven times the Lord's Prayer, seven times the Angelical Salutation, with Holy Mary and Glory be to the Father each time, and the Creed once. They are to abstain from flesh meat every Wednesday; and if any one should use meat on that day he is to supply the deficiency by reciting the above-mentioned prayers twice."

"The double prayers are for a punishment, then," says Jerry. "Of course," says Andy. "Why, then," says Jerry, "isn't it a surprising thing that our Church makes a punishment out of what one would think would be a pleasure. If a man does wrong so many prayers are put on him, just as so many lashes are put on a deserter; and thus, instead of counting prayer to God a pleasure, he is taught to consider it a punishment." "Well," says Murty, "it's enough to put a body's heart across in them to be listening to such jaw. I'm not able for you in the logic, but just listen to the blessings that every scapularian will get, when you and the likes of you are broiling in purgatory. The book tells us that 'the Blessed Virgin declares, whosoever observes the prescribed conditions punctually shall, as speedily as it may be possible, be liberated by her hands from the pains of purgatory, before the first Saturday after their departure from this life, and placed in eternal glory.' So that," says he, "at the worst a scapularian can't be kept more than a week in purgatory, and maybe not that same." "It's all very fine," says Jerry—"it's all very fine if we could only be sure that it was true." But, my dear, when the women heard him say that you'd think the life would leave them. "Oh! Mother of Moses," says one. "Oh! Holy Agatha," says another. "Oh! blessed Saint Laurence O'Toole," says a third, "save us and defend us from this unbelieving heretic;" and with that they set to crossing themselves as hard as they could lick. But Jerry took it very cool; and says he, "Take it easy, ladies; take it easy, or you'll be after spoiling your complexion. But, Murty darling," says he, "you read out something about 'prescribed conditions.' Now, I'd like to know what the conditions are." "Well," says he, "the first is 'the sacred scapular's to be worn at all times by each person.'"

"Anything more?" says Jerry. "It must be properly blessed," says he. "Anything more?" says Jerry. "It must be imparted by such as have a special licence to do so," says he. "Anything more?" says Jerry. "The person's name must be 'written in the confraternity book,'" says he. "Anything more?" says Jerry. "They must fast occasionally," says he. "Anything more?" says Jerry. "They must pray every day," says he. "Anything more?" says Jerry. "Well," says he, "there's one more little condition that I was near forgetting. 'Every member on admission is to pay one and a penny, and on every third Sunday sixpence halfpenny in the confraternity room.'"

"Hurra," says Jerry, "we've got the cat out of the bag at last. Murty, my jewel, there's the real virtue of the scapular; if it doesn't keep houses from being burnt, it gives the priests the means of building many a good house; if it doesn't keep men from drunkenness, it gives his reverence the means of getting a snug little tumbler; if it doesn't bring souls out of purgatory, it brings shillings out of the pocket; so, hurra for the scapular, and I allow that there's great virtue in it, after all. 'Tis meat and drink, and board and lodging to the blessed men that sells them; it helps to buy a horse, and feed a horse, for his reverence; it helps to get a fine black coat and make him look like a gentleman; it helps to get a nice outside car and soft cushions for the holy man; and sure, after doing all that, I'd be worse than a heathen to deny that there's great virtue in the scapular. Murty, dear," says he, "I allow that I'm beaten; I give up entirely; I'm sacked out and out, and I'll never deny that there's great power in the scapular." "My blessing be on you, darling," says poor old Molly; "sure I knew you wouldn't go against your religion, and you with the good old blood of the Donovans in you. May the saints reward you, and may the blessed St.

Simon Stock himself mark you to glory, acushla." But while this was going on Andy Kelly and the Reader came in, and when they heard what it was all about I thought that Andy looked very uneasy in himself. At last the Reader says to him, "Mr. Kelly," says he, "now that you and I are here, that know something more about controversy than our friends present, suppose we discuss the scapular as our subject for the night." "No," says Andy, "I'll have nothing to say to it." "Why so?" says the Reader. "Because it's no part of my religion," says he. "If foolish people like Murty Leary and old Molly Crone believe in it, that's no reason why a man of learning like me should uphold it. Show it to me," says he, "in Pope Pius's Creed, or in the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, and then I'll fight for it; but I won't let you put anything on me that my Church doesn't put on me." "You won't defend the scapular, then," says the Reader. "No," says Andy; "I'll defend purgatory, or the mass, or transubstantiation, or any doctrine of my Church; but I won't argue about the scapular." Oh! Mr. Editor, if you had a heart of stone you'd have pitied the poor creatures when they heard what Andy said. They knew nothing about the Saviour and but little about God; but they all knew about the scapular. The poor old creatures had often sold the blanket from under them to pay their dues, and they thought that their souls were safe if they died with the scapular upon them. I declare to you, Mr. Editor, your heart would have bled for them. The big tears poured down their cheeks, and even the Reader himself pitied the creatures; and says he to Andy, "Isn't it a burning shame to teach people to put their trust in a bit of card and silk, instead of in Christ the Saviour." "I told you before," says Andy, "that the scapular is no part of my religion." "But," says the Reader, "I put it to you, as an honest man, and in the sight of God, don't you know that it's the religion of thousands of poor ignorant creatures." "Well," says he, "I can't deny that it is." "And," says the Reader, "how can you wonder at it when your priests write such books as that which Murty read from. It's a sin and a shame," says he, "to make poor creatures pay for scapulars to save them, instead of directing them to the Lord Jesus Christ, who would save them without money and without price. My dear friends," says he, "don't trust to the scapular, but trust to Jesus; it can't blot out your sins, but He can; it can't save your souls, but He can, and will if you come to Him; it can't bring you to heaven, but He is ready to do it if you only rest on Him as your Saviour. Some of you are poor, and old, and hungry; but the blessed Lord says, 'Come to me all you that labour and are burdened and I will refresh you.' All of you are sinners, but the Redeemer says, 'Him that cometh to me I will not cast out.' Your sins are many and great, but your own Bible tells you that 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' He loves poor sinners, for He died upon the cross for them. He loves you and is ready to save you, if you'll only pray to Him and put your trust in Him. Make the Lord Jesus Christ your scapular, and then you'll be safe. Neither sickness, nor poverty, nor death itself can harm you; for the blessed Saviour who shed His blood for you will keep and protect you." And with that he left us.

Your humble servant to command,

DAN CARTHY.

MODERN MIRACLES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—Though you have, from time to time, exposed in your pages the imposture of our Lady of La Salette, I do not find that you have noticed a case which occurred also in France much about the same time, and which may help to throw light on some of the successful frauds of the middle ages. I allude to the case of Rose Tamisier.

Rose Tamisier was educated by the nuns of a convent at Salon. She became remarkable for the visits which she received from angels and saints, and especially the Blessed Virgin. Returning to her village, she refused all nourishment but the consecrated wafer. The vine dresser, the mountain shepherd, the cure became her followers. Her intense devotion was alleged to have produced on her person the representation of the cross, the spear, the chalice, &c.; and on the 10th November, 1850, it was reported that a picture of our Lord had, in the village church, exuded blood in answer to her prayers. The alleged miracle was authenticated by the chief ecclesiastical and civil authorities; a deed of attestation was signed; the Archbishop of Avignon preached on the stupendous occasion. But, alas! after some time an intelligent and persevering chemist discovered the secret of the deception, and produced bleeding pictures to any required amount. The question passed at once out of the sphere of theology to that of the correctional police, and the saint, being found guilty of fraud at the assizes at Nismes, was ignominiously sentenced to fine and imprisonment.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

VIATOR.

¹ This was the answer made to the writer by an intelligent Roman Catholic.

² Matt. xi. 23.

³ John vi. 37.

⁴ John i. 9.